

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 220625

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR OAS CU VE

SUBJECT: CUBA IN THE OAS - VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE QUIESCENT

FOR AMBASSADOR CRIMMINS

1. WE HAVE CONSULTED INFORMALLY AND FREQUENTLY WITH BRAZILIAN OAS DELEGATION ON CUBA SANCTIONS QUESTION AND THEY SHARE OUR VIEW THAT VENEZUELAN AND COSTA RICAN INITIATIVES ARE QUIESCENT FOR THE TIME BEING. IT MIGHT BE USEFUL, HOWEVER, TO HAVE AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS IN BRASILIA AT THIS JUNCTURE BECAUSE RANKING MEXICAN FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL HAS TOLD US PRIVATELY THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WISHES CUBA TO BE DISCUSSED IN SOME FASHION DURING FORTH-COMING LATIN FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN BOGOTA.

2. YOU WILL RECALL THAT PRIOR TO THE CHILEAN COUP IT WAS ONLY LACK OF AGREEMENT ON FORMULA THAT PREVENTED A MAJORITY

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VOTE IN THE OAS IN FAVOR OF RELAXING SANCTIONS. THE NEW

CHILEAN GOVERNMENT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY VOTE AGAINST A CHANGE IN SANCTIONS, WHICH DEPRIVES THE VENEZUELAN FORMULA OF A CRUCIAL VOTE AND CUBA OF AN AGGRESSIVE ADVOCATE IN HEMISPHERIC FORUMS. NEITHER INDICATIONS OF CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ALLENDE GOVERNMENT NOR FOREIGN MINISTER ROA'S OUTRAGEOUS BEHAVIOR AT THE UN HAVE HELPED CUBANS. IN THIS ATMOSPHERE NO ONE SEEMS INCLINED TO PUSH THE SANCTIONS ISSUE FOR THE TIME BEING.

WE UNDERSTAND EVENTS IN CHILE, MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, HAVE CAUSED VENEZUELA (AND OTHERS, LIKE COSTA RICA) TO TEMPORARILY DE-EMPHASIZE AND SLOW DOWN THEIR CAMPAIGN TO RELAX SANCTIONS. VENEZUELAN OAS DELEGATION HAS TOLD US REPEATEDLY THAT THEY WOULD NOT PRESENT CUBA CASE FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION UNLESS THEY WERE CERTAIN OF HAVING AT LEAST A SIMPLE MAJORITY I.E. TWELVE VOTES, WHICH WITHOUT CHILE THEY DO NOT HAVE. IF COPEI WINS THE DECEMBER ELECTIONS, WE WOULD EXPECT THEM TO RENEW THEIR EFFORTS TO GET A MAJORITY OF OAS MEMBERS TO VOTE FOR QTE OPTIONAL UNQTE SANCTIONS OR ELSE GO AHEAD AND RESUME RELATIONS WITH CUBA ON THEIR OWN. IF ACCION DEMOCRATICA WERE TO WIN, WE WOULD EXPECT THEM TO BE LESS INTERESTED IN RENEWING RELATIONS WITH CUBA, BUT WE ARE NOT SURE WHAT THEIR ATTITUDE WOULD BE ON THE QUESTION OF SANCTIONS PER SE, NOR COULD WE FORECLOSE A MOVE BY AN OUTGOING COPEI GOVERNMENT TO GET THE OAS SANCTIONS MODIFIED BEFORE IT TURNED OVER THE REINS.

4. IN SUM, WE HAVE GAINED A USEFUL RESPITE BECAUSE OF EVENTS IN CHILE, LACK OF AGREEMENT ON A FORMULA, AND OUR REPRESENTATIONS (WHICH HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT IN CENTRAL AMERICA). ON THE OTHER HAND, THE BASIC VOTING PICTURE APPARENTLY REMAINS UNCHANGED, EXCEPT FOR THE DEFECTION OF CHILE, I.E. THOSE WHO TRULY SUPPORT MANDATORY SANCTIONS ARE IN A MINORITY. DESPITE THE FACT THAT MOST LATIN GOVERNMENTS HAVE LITTLE USE FOR CASTRO, MANDATORY SANCTIONS PER SE ARE DISLIKED BY MANY LATINS ON PHILOSOPHIC ROUNDS AND WE CAN EXPECT THE ISSUE TO SURFACE AGAIN. RUSH

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